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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 006743

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/12/2021
TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PTER](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: US-FRANCE CONSULTATIONS ON NUCLEAR TRANSPORTATION
SECURITY

Classified By: ESTH COUNSELOR ROBERT W. DRY, FOR REASONS 1.4, (A), (B),
(D), (G)

11. (C) Summary: In an October 9-12 consultation, a U.S. team led by DOE Deputy U/S for Counterterrorism Aoki met with French officials responsible for oversight and implementation of security for civil nuclear materials and facilities, focusing on security for nuclear materials being transported within the civil fuel cycle. French interagency participation and preparations for the meeting was led by Eric Plaisant on the staff of the Senior Defense Official (nuclear security regulator - Haut Fonctionnaire de Defense or HFD) in the Ministry of Industry, Economy, and Finance. In addition to briefings in Paris, the U.S. delegation observed field demonstrations at the headquarters of the Mobile Intervention Group of the Gendarmerie, visited the transportation operations center operated by the Nuclear Safety Research Institute (IRSN), visited the La Hague reprocessing plant to view the transport vehicles used for civil plutonium shipments between French facilities, and met with the Gendarmerie squadron at Cherbourg charged with escort responsibilities for these shipments. French agencies were very candid in describing their procedures and provided extensive information and live demonstrations of their capabilities and tactics. The team was offered extensive opportunities to interact with senior officials, Gendarmerie commanders, and working-level operational staff involved in nuclear transportation security. We came away impressed with the serious commitment of the French government to the protection of its civil nuclear materials/facilities and with the high level of professionalism and training of the protective forces. The French were candid in describing their current situation and areas of concern and expressed interest in continuing a strong interaction with the U.S. on nuclear

materials security, including transportation.

Background

¶2. (C) In January 2005, a DOE-led interagency delegation met with their French counterparts to exchange views on security of nuclear materials and facilities. In this context, in September 2005, a French team of nuclear security experts visited the Surry commercial nuclear power reactor located outside of Columbia, South Carolina to discuss performance based testing against a Design Basis Threat (DBT). As part of the agenda, they witnessed a series of force-on-force exercises at the plant. At the conclusion of that meeting, it was agreed to hold further consultations concerning the transport of nuclear materials, especially Category I and II. This resulted in the current October 9-12 set of meetings.

Topics discussed

¶3. (S) Transportation of civil nuclear materials: In 2005, a total of 1558 nuclear shipments were made in France. Of that, 515 were high security (Cat I and II) shipments, approximately 72% by road. The large size of the transport vehicles limits the available routes making it difficult to maintain randomness and hence security of these shipments. In addition, several anti-nuclear organizations maintain a presence at shipping origins further complicating shipment confidentiality.

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¶4. (C) French security addresses the difficulty of maintaining confidentiality of shipping routes by use of special transport vehicles and a robust Gendarmerie protective force presence. Shipping information is also classified and not publicly divulged although a significant number of regional Gendarmerie authorities are provided routing details.

¶5. (S) Threat: French authorities perceive peaceful demonstrators to be the primary threat during the transportation of nuclear materials. Protective forces are also prepared to prevent threats posed by theft or diversion of the transport and its material. It does not appear that sabotage has been incorporated into their protective security plan, although they have given considerable thought to mitigating the possible consequences of sabotage. They mentioned increasing concern about attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Although we did not specifically discuss the US or French DBT due to classification limits, the French did state that their DBT for transportation and fixed sites were the same.

¶6. (S) Gendarmerie: The US team visited the Maison Alfort, headquarters of the national-level intervention unit that includes the GIGN counterterrorism team as well as the unit with specific nuclear protection missions. At both locations, the US team was provided a demonstration of how the Gendarmerie are trained to react to situations most commonly encountered during transports. Several demonstrations were presented including reaction to a peaceful anti-nuclear demonstration that blocked the roadway, a hostage situation, Gendarmerie response to an attempt to disrupt a convoy and an attempt to attach an explosive charge to the transporter from an adversary vehicle.

¶7. (C) The Gendarmerie have both military and police functions. They are professionals with knowledge, skills and abilities to perform security missions. They are located throughout France and depend on phased support to assure proper protection of shipments. There are specialized Gendarmerie units prepared for advanced level of response.

¶8. (S) Transport: The second element of the French

transportation security strategy is a robust transport vehicle. The US team was not allowed to look inside the trailer, but was shown the inside of the cab. The tractor is a German-made Mercedes truck bought stock from the factory. The vehicle is then dismantled and equipped with electronics and armor, but in external appearance continues to resemble a standard civilian vehicle. The armor is on all sides and including the curved wind screen. The vehicle is designed by a private contractor under IRSN supervision. The IRSN design concept does not include explosive protection.

¶9. (S) Once the vehicle is linked to the trailer and the container and the entire system connected together, then the vehicle can be started. Once started, the systems are active and cannot be turned off until arrival at the destination. There are vehicle delay and protective systems incorporated into the design. The container is lightly armored and reference was made to internal protective systems, including gas and immobilization factors.

¶10. (C) Future efforts: The French expressed interest in continuing a strong interaction with the U.S. on nuclear materials security, including transportation. In the immediate future, meetings will be held on specific technical topics with periodic higher-level steering committee meetings to assess progress and other next steps.

¶11. (C) In the Spring 2007 timeframe, we hope to host an experts meeting on secure transportation, in coordination with the Office of Secure Transportation. This interaction may also include the FBI in Washington, DC. Both teams expressed interest in a meeting on modeling and simulations, possibly discussing US and French capabilities. It may also be of benefit to try and tie some of the Sandia/IRSN efforts on container security with Emergency Response/Consequence Management discussions, that might include a full scale tabletop or similar exercise that runs from an event to the response and clean-up.

¶12. (SBU) The US team was led by Steven Aoki (DOE Deputy U/S for Counterterrorism) and included Joseph Krol (DOE Director for Emergency Operations), Calvin Irvin (DOE Office of Secure Transportation), Kevin Leifheit (DOE Office of Security), Russell Hibbs (DOE/NNSA), David McDarby (DOD/DTRA), and Joseph Glaser (DOE Office for Counterterrorism) and Robert Dry, ESTH Counselor Embassy Paris. The French delegation was headed by Emmanuel Sartorius, France's High Civil Official for Defense (HFD) and included a number of senior officials and officers from a variety of French research and security organizations such as the Nuclear Safety Research Institute (IRSN), the Civil Defense and Security Directorate of the Ministry of Interior (DDSC), and the National Gendarmerie. Representatives from French nuclear supplier company AREVA also participated in discussions and site visits.

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